

Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Transportation



Bladensburg Road Multimodal Safety and Access Study
Meeting Minutes

Interagency Advisory Committee - Meeting # 1

Meeting Date: April 6, 2022

Microsoft Teams

Meeting Attendee List Attached

1. Call to Order

Karyn McAlister called the Kickoff Meeting of the Interagency Advisory Council (IAC) to order at 4:01 p.m. The meeting convened via Microsoft Teams due to the social distancing requirements mandated by COVID-19.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Karyn McAlister welcomed all participants to the meeting and highlighted this first meeting as an organizational meeting of the IAC as well as a project update discussion. Introductions ensued of the representatives from DDOT, the project team from KLS, RKK, and F&P, and the members of the IAC. (List of meeting attendees included at the end of the meeting minutes)

3. Logistics

Karyn McAlister provided an overview of the meeting's logistics, including how to use the various functions of the Microsoft Teams system; and the ground rules/protocol for the meeting.

4. IAC Role

Karyn McAlister summarized the role of the IAC their responsibilities and the operating guidelines. In summary, the responsibilities of the IAC include:

- a. Attend IAC meetings.
- b. Bring Agency concerns and opportunities
- c. Provide input, skills and knowledge for study analysis, alternative concepts and recommendations (pros, cons and tradeoffs).

The IAC will convene approximately five times and will meet for up to one and a half hours each session.

5. Project Overview

Karyn McAlister provided an overview of the project's goals, stating that the project's purpose is to conduct a multimodal traffic study to develop solutions to improve roadway safety and access for all users, especially pedestrians and bicyclists. The key study objectives are:

- a. Review and analyze the safety and access of existing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities
- b. Evaluate results of roadway reconfigurations, including reducing travel lanes and including on-road bicycle facilities
- c. Develop conceptual designs that address safety and access
- d. Conduct an environmental review
- e. Identify issues to be settled in future designs

6. Project Scope of Work

Karyn McAlister summarized the project's study area. The corridor is approximately 2.5 miles long. The primary study area is Bladensburg Road NE from Eastern Avenue in the north to Benning Road in the south. Major elements of the scope of work include data collection, analysis, concept development and screening, preferred concept development, environmental documentation, and public engagement. Karyn McAlister then summarized the anticipated focus for each IAC meeting.

A summary of the scope of work was presented, including the existing conditions and data collection; including a preview of the preliminary data such as crashes, traffic volumes and transit information.

The project will also develop an evaluation matrix that will evaluate the No Build, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 concepts. The matrix will help see the tradeoffs among the options and help the community choose the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative will be developed into the final concept plan. High level cost estimates to be developed for the future design and construction. An environmental review will be completed. This discussion concluded with the Scope of Work summary and anticipated schedule.

7. IAC Member Concerns about the Bladensburg Road corridor

The DDOT and Project Team discussed the perspectives of IAC members regarding the project. The following discussion ensued:

1. Jamie Carrington, WMATA – focused on looking at how people get to our transit services and the B2 is one of the busiest buses in the entire region. Especially interested in helping improve bus performance and the safety of people walking to get on and off the bus.

Response – The Team will review transit data and access to bus stop locations as part of the existing conditions assessment.

2. Louis Arguello, DC Water - consider the underground assets (of all the utility companies) during the study. Work close and coordinate throughout the project.

Response – The present scope is to work within the curb lines and minimize any ground disturbance.

3. Nick Kushner, DPW asked if the study would break the corridor in segments since there are different land uses throughout.

Response – Yes, the corridor is divided into many segments based on land use and other considerations.

4. James Dunbar, DOEE – Interested in installing stormwater within the ROW/median. Noted that usually traffic calming devices work well with adding green space, providing stormwater management opportunities, and mitigating heat island issues, so I'll be coming at safety from that direction. Speaking from personal experience, it gets hot along the corridor.

Response-As the Team goes into the concept development phase a range of strategies will be considered.

5. Tony Goodman, HSEMA supported a protected bike lane along Bladensburg Road to officially improve their evacuation plans.

Response - As the Team goes into the concept development phase a range of strategies will be considered.

6. Marlon Wright, DPW stated that DPW needs to service trash in the area.

Response – Comment noted.

7. National Arboretum, Richard Olsen explained that the number one issue is accessibility since the Arboretum is not on the Metro. Drivers were using the Arboretum to cut through and avoid traffic (R St.); Waze was directing drivers through the Arboretum. Drivers from Bladensburg Road would zoom through the Arboretum to get to eastbound New York Avenue. He also stated that the Arboretum's fence is hit several times a year, usually in the middle of the night, after the bars have closed, drunk drivers. He thinks vehicles hitting the fence is under reported.

- The reconfiguration of the entrances has been pending Congressional funding for 22 years now. They need \$6m for the entrances.
- The China Garden exhibit is also pending funding and he has no idea when that project will happen.
- The Maryland Avenue gate was removed in the 90's and funding is needed to reinstate the entrance.
- The R Street entrance was designed for staff but it has become a default entrance.

- He offered to hold a public meeting at the Arboretum inside or outside. Their auditorium holds 200.
8. Mount Olivet Cemetery, Cheryl Tyiska said the cemetery's fence gets hit by vehicles (5 - 6 times in the last two years). They are trying to modernize the cemetery. Interested in safety along the corridor. They've stopped using several of their gates because it's too dangerous for people to slow down and turn.
- For safety reasons, they only use the main gate on Bladensburg Road and the back gate on West Virginia. At the main gate on Bladensburg Road, they have difficulty getting funeral processions in and out, especially for a funeral trying to make a left turn into the cemetery against fast oncoming traffic. Funeral directors know to "make the block" so they can come up Bladensburg Road to make a right into the cemetery. Unfortunately, that means some funeral processions must wind their way down Mount Olivet Road, West Virginia Avenue and sometimes even Montana to get back onto Bladensburg. Depending on when Kipp lets out and the construction along Mt. Olivet, it can take quite a while to navigate the route. (The gate on West Virginia is too narrow for a big hearse or limo so they generally don't bring services in that way.)
 - Because of speeding on Bladensburg Road, they have had several accidents where people hit the stone walls, or they hit the median first and then "bounce" into our entrance when they lose control. Generally, these accidents happen at night and involve impaired driving. Two recent incidents involved vehicles that were abandoned and had to be towed. One was a stolen car.
 - Cars exiting Mt Olivet Cemetery onto Bladensburg can now go left or right. I think going left can be quite risky and I never do it myself. Many cars just muscle their way into traffic so they can turn left.
 - Mt Olivet Cemetery tries to limit use of the gate on West Virginia Avenue because cars parked along the road limit visibility to oncoming cars on the left, and they often park very near the narrow gate entrance. With the new bike lanes and cars now parked further out into the roadway, visibility is even more restricted.
 - The gate near the storage facility on Bladensburg and the one on Mt. Olivet Road are closed, and the closures do not cause us inconvenience anymore. In fact, the storage facility gate entrance will soon be turned into a stormwater bio-retention area and will

never be used again. When cars approach either of those gates, they have to slow down and make a hard turn, which is dangerous with cars coming up behind them at speed.

9. Safety, operations, and other integration issues

It was stated that this would be addressed in the study and future IAC meetings as the existing conditions assessment is completed.

10. Next Steps

Karyn McAlister and the Project Team indicated the next steps to be taken in the process include:

1. Complete Data Collection (April)
2. Traffic Modeling (April)
3. Public Input (Ongoing)
 - i. Update Website
 - ii. Interactive Tool and Survey
 - iii. Corridor Outreach
 - iv. IAC/Stakeholder Outreach
4. Finalize Existing Conditions Report
5. Finalize Corridor Base Map (April)
6. Community Meeting #1 (May)
7. Start Concept Development Discussions (May)

11. Adjournment

The April 3, 2022 IAC meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. by Karyn McAlister.

12. Chat Log Below:

Chat:

Olsen, Richard (Guest) 4:34 PM - USNA Fence gets hit several times a year, like Olivette's!

AbouSamra, Rita (OP) (Guest) 4:45 PM - Is this assessment going to be from building face to building face?

Dunbar, James (DOEE) (Guest) 4:50 PM - Usually traffic calming devices work well with adding green space, providing stormwater management opportunities, and mitigating heat island issues, so I'll be coming at safety from that direction. Speaking from personal experience, it gets hot along the corridor

Branyan, George (DDOT) (Guest) 4:53 PM - As soon as the District gets a vote in congress we'll get right on that!

Olsen, Richard (Guest) 4:59 PM - Would you like our annual attendance/vehicle data?

Lane, Cecilia (DOEE) (Guest) 5:00 PM - too late!

Goodman, Tony (HSEMA) (Guest) 5:00 PM - Good day & time

Carrington, James W. (Guest) 5:00 PM - works foe me

Dunbar, James (DOEE) 5:00 PM - A little earlier would be better -- ending by 4pm or earlier ideally 😊

Kushner, Nick (DPR) (Guest) 5:00 PM - 3-4 better

Olsen, Richard (Guest) 5:01 PM - Our auditorium holds 200 so could host a public meeting if necessary?

Olsen, Richard (Guest) 5:01 PM - Time works, Yup

Craven Rand (Guest) 5:01 PM - Works for me.

[5:02 PM] Duckett, Anthony (DPW) - Please send out the slideshow, like

Bladensburg Road Study - Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC)			
Meeting Attendee Summary			
4/6/2020			
<u>Role</u>	<u>Full Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Email</u>
DDOT	Ali, Abdusemed (DDOT)	DDOT	Abdusemed.Ali@dc.gov
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IAC	Kushner, Nick (DPR)	DPR	Nick.Kushner@dc.gov
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IAC	May, Reginald (DPW)	DPW	Reginald.May2@dc.gov
IAC	Moore, Christopher (MPD)	MPD	christopher.moore@dc.gov
IAC	Olsen, Richard	National Arboretum	richard.olsen@usda.gov
IAC	Rand, Craven	Friends of National Arboretum	crand@fona.org
IAC	Tyiska, Cheryl	Mt Olivet Cemetery	mto@ccaw.org
IAC	Wright, Marlon (DPW)	DPW	marlon.wright@dc.gov
IAC Count	16		

Project Team	Matthew Ridgway	Fehr and Peers	M.Ridgway@fehrandpeers.com
Project Team	Boodlal, Leverson (Guest)	KLS	leverson.boodlal@kls-eng.com
Project Team	Sean Moore	KLS	sean.moore@kls-eng.com
Project Team	Mike Gifford	RKK	mgifford@rkk.com
Project Team Count	4		
Grand Count	36		